



News Release

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Teen immunization rates improve in Washington

More work needed to ensure community protection

OLYMPIA — Teen immunization rates are up across the board with Washington at or above the national average in some key categories, according to a new survey.

The second year of state teen data from the National Immunization Survey shows improvement for every vaccine. The survey included adolescents 13 to 17 years old. Our state met or exceeded the national average for newer immunizations recommended for teens that protect against human papillomavirus (HPV), whooping cough (pertussis), and meningococcal disease.

Teen immunization rates for at least one dose of HPV vaccine rose from 46.5 percent to 60.0 percent in Washington. The national average is 44.3 percent. The state rate for whooping cough vaccination also increased from 34.7 percent to 60.1 percent, compared to the national average of 55.6 percent.

“We’re encouraged. This shows that the hard work of public health and health care providers to educate parents and teens is paying off,” said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. “Teens don’t visit health care providers regularly like young children do, and many people don’t realize that teens need immunizations to stay healthy just like children and infants.”

This is only the second year of state data for teen rates. Washington still has a way to go to reach the federal 90 percent goal. Making sure teens’ immunizations are up-to-date benefits the teens and helps protect the whole community. Unprotected teens can spread diseases to friends and family members who aren’t fully protected. Some diseases like chickenpox are more dangerous for teens than they are for young children. The current whooping cough epidemic in California shows the importance of making sure teens get their booster dose of whooping cough vaccine.

Parents should make sure to schedule a well-child check-up at age 11 or 12. They should also get their teens immunized when they see their health care provider for sports physicals, injuries, and mild illnesses. Teens may have to provide their immunization record to attend school or college, join the military, or travel abroad.

The rates also show the diligent work of many groups to be sure all children and teens continued to have access to vaccine during the changes to the state Childhood Vaccine Program. The program buys vaccine for all kids in the state and temporarily stopped providing HPV vaccine for some children due to state budget cuts. New funding to the state from health plans closed the gap and since May 1, all kids age 11-18 can once again get HPV vaccine from the state program, along with all other vaccines.

The National Immunization Survey data estimates how many teens received six recommended vaccines. Three of these are newer vaccines recommended to be given at age 11 or 12 years: the tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis vaccine (Tdap), the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV), and the HPV vaccine. The survey also covers three routine childhood vaccines: measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine (MMR); hepatitis B vaccine; and chickenpox (varicella) vaccine.

Parents are urged to use their regular health care providers for teen immunizations. For help finding a health care provider or an immunization clinic, call the [local health agency](#) (www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm) in your area or the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588.

More information on teen immunizations is available on the Department of Health [Immunization Program Web site](#) (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/immunization/adolescent-facts.htm/>). Information about the [National Immunization Teen-survey data](#) is available as well (http://www.cdc.gov/nis/about_nis.htm#nis_teen).

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Visit the Washington Department of Health website at http://www.doh.wa.gov for <i>a healthy dose of information</i> .
